



Bedford Group RoSPA Advanced Drivers

RoSPA Advanced Drivers and Riders Accredited

Members Newsletter

August / September 2024

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Welcome to the August 2024 issue of the Bedford Group of the RoSPA Advanced Drivers Newsletter.

Main topics:

Meeting Report - Presentation by P.C Mark Fairclough from the Beds, Cambs and Herts Road Policing Unit, 18th June 2024

Committee update

Congratulations

Smart Motorways.

Answers to Quiz from May 2024 Edition - Information, Observation & Anticipation

Val Jones

August 2024

Meeting Report - P.C. Mark Fairclough from BCH Roads Policing

A meeting inviting Members and Associates was held on 18th June 2024

Firstly, I would like to say a big thankyou to and Martin Smith for allowing us to use a room at the **Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Service Headquarters** and Nick Clements for his hospitality and ensuring we had everything we needed.

An interesting and comprehensive presentation on the role and responsibilities of the Road Policing Unit was given by P.C. Mark Fairclough from BCH Roads Policing.

We had a dozen group members in attendance, including most of the committee and our tutors. We were also delighted to welcome one of our longstanding members, a member who'd recently had their first test pass and two prospective Associates. A particular "thank you" to those of you who joined us.

Mark introduced himself as a roads policing officer from Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Roads Policing Unit.

Traffic police are still known in some police circles as the "Black Rats", a

nickname for the early Metropolitan Police traffic division officers who rode black motorcycles and wore all over black uniforms including capes.

Mark explained the role of the Road Policing Unit is to increase safety on the roads across Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire (BCH) and to support each county to work towards a local strategy.

They are part of a Joint Protective Services team made up of officers of all the forces that offer specialist support.

They operate from two main bases, one in the north which is situated in Cambridgeshire at Police Headquarters in Huntingdon and the other in the south based in Stevenage.

The Roads Policing Unit (RPU) is responsible for policing major road routes. It responds to incidents where there is serious injury or fatalities including motorway incidents.

The RPU patrol and respond to incidents on fast roads. They attend and investigate serious and fatal collisions on the road network and may support local officers with serious incidents on local roads.

Their work includes the following:

- Pursuits
- Using ANPR capability to target criminals
- Supporting front line officers with injury road traffic collisions

- Dealing with fatal road traffic collisions across the three counties of BCH
- Dealing with cases involving serious injuries on a case-by-case basis

Mark talked eloquently about some of the work involved in responding to incidents. There are many reasons why it's important that police and other responders are professional and work as a team in doing so. Particularly important is the "golden hour" following an incident for gathering evidence. There is also the need to deal with people at the scene, including victims, bystanders, witnesses and suspects – and having to assess who falls into which category.

Mark's role includes work as a Family Liaison Officer. Being able support families at their worst time when they have lost a loved one is both harrowing and fulfilling.

Road traffic law is complex, and Mark ably summarised some of the areas they deal with such as familiar areas of careless or dangerous driving, breaches of licences or insurance. One area which is frequently abused is motor trade insurance policies, which should only be used to cover use in connection with the business, not social domestic and pleasure use. The team are vigilant in this area.

Mark also described the challenge of covering the road network and their support of local officers, themselves often facing huge pressures. There are also issues marrying the advanced tech needed for police vehicles with the tech which comes as standard with modern cars – "the two don't always work well together".

Mark said his preference where possible was always education – as he put it "by telling people why the law on, say, mobile phones is in place, I hope I can have more

influence than if I simply issue them a ticket".

Mark invited questions whilst associates shared refreshments.

It was a fascinating presentation, and the committee would like to thank Mark for giving his valuable time. It is much appreciated.

**** Committee update ****

As this newsletter goes to press, we are sharing the news that Martin Kidds has resigned as Chairman and Secretary with immediate effect.

An EGM was held on 29.09.2024 with remaining committee members to discuss a way forward.

It was agreed that we should send an urgent message out to our members to ask if any of our full members (i.e. with a current RoSPA pass would consider taking on the **position of Chair or Secretary?**

We also need willing committee members. If you

are interested in any of these positions and would like to find out more, please contact David Worgan via email

treasurer@roada-bedford.org.uk

IMPORTANT: Please express your interest by Wednesday 16th October.

If we get no response, our group could fold since we need to secure a viable committee for the group to continue.

Val Jones – Newsletter Editor

Congratulations are in order

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Well done to Darren Tadman for achieving a Gold Advanced Driving Test on 23rd September.

He was tutored by Mike Hancock and supported by David Worgan another of our tutors for his pretest assessment

Retests – a reminder

Members with a retest are invited to arrange a free observed drive to provide any pointers to prepare for their test.

Val Jones, Newsletter Editor

Reminder

If you are waiting to be allocated a Tutor, you are advised to purchase and read the current edition of Roadcraft (2020) and The Official Highway Code (2022).

When you are allocated a Tutor, you are advised to **make contact within a four-week period.**

Drives can be arranged at a mutually convenient time. If contact has not been made within the four-week period, you may be put back on the waiting list to allow another member access.

Remember to forward details on your test passes, dates and grades to secretary@roada-bedford.org.uk to ensure we have the correct details and can celebrate your successes.

Have you been notified by RoSPA that you are due a retest?

If so, **the group offers an observed drive to members ahead of a retest.** Let us know if you would like to book an observed drive through our Training Co-ordinator? training@roada-bedford.org.uk

If we have the relevant details of your last test in our membership records, we can anticipate when a request may be forthcoming.



Smart Motorways

*(From the Department of Transport document published 15th December 2022)
(Reference provided by Dougie Palmer)*

“Smart Motorway Comparison Report”

This document outlined different types of Smart Motorway.

It looked smart motorways in terms of impacts, economics and safety

Three different types of Smart motorways were compared

1) Controlled (including stretches of controlled motorways which have also been widened)

2) Dynamic hard shoulder running (DHS)

3) All lane running (ALR)

1) Controlled Motorways

Controlled motorways retain the conventional motorway configuration, including retaining the hard shoulder, but have additional technology such as variable and mandatory speed limits to control the speed of traffic, and overhead electronic signs to display messages to drivers.

Controlled motorways alone do not provide additional capacity, however in some locations, controlled motorways have also been widened to provide an additional running lane.

2) Dynamic hard shoulder (DHS) running Motorways.

DHS motorways apply controlled motorway technology, but also **temporarily increase capacity by utilising the hard shoulder** as a running lane at peak times. DHS motorways **also have emergency areas** (EAs) providing a safe place to stop in an emergency, set away from the carriageway.

3) All Lane Running Motorways

ALR motorways apply controlled motorway technology but **permanently convert the hard shoulder to a running lane increasing capacity**. ALR motorways also have emergency areas and **stopped vehicle technology**.

It is when there is a fault with the stopped vehicle technology, radar and cameras when there is real danger!!

The paper concludes that overall, in terms of serious or fatal casualties, smart motorways (all types) are the safest roads on the Smart Road network.

It concludes **Smart Motorways perform better than conventional motorways in terms of safety, in particular casualties due to collisions between moving vehicles**. However, **stopped vehicle collisions are more likely to result in fatal or serious injury on motorways without a permanent hard shoulder.**

This being said, the paper points out that stopped vehicle collisions are a **small proportion of collisions across all roads.**



Smart Motorways: When Technology fails

This article is based on notes taken from a recent BBC Panorama programme (April 2024)

What would you do if you broke down on a smart motorway where there is no hard shoulder to keep you safe?

It means you are more likely to be seriously injured or killed.

The government suggests new technology is there to keep you safe, but insiders say the technology often doesn't work.

Panorama revealed how thousands of safety failures are putting motorists at risk.

There are 400 miles of smart motorways in England most of where the hard shoulder has been converted to a live lane or converted to traffic at busy times of the day. Smart motorways use the hard shoulder as an extra lane to ease congestion and keep traffic flowing but as a driver it's hard not to think "if I break down where am I going to go in a breakdown situation?"

If the system is working correctly, a red cross is displayed on the gantry diverting the traffic away from the vulnerable vehicle.

It has been reported that at least 79 people have been killed in accidents on Smart motorways since they were first introduced in 2010.

In the past five years, seven different coroners have called for smart motorways to be made safer. If there is a crash and there's no hard shoulder it makes things difficult for emergency services as it can take them longer to reach victims.

A year ago, the government stated that no more smart motorways will be built. On existing smart motorways, the government suggests improvements to technology will make them safer. £900 million is to be spent on the remaining smart motorways. But the question remains "Does the technology work?"

Smart technology includes **cameras** to spot **marooned vehicles**, **safety refuges** in place if you break down and need to pull over, and **radar to detect stopped vehicles**. There are also **sensors** to monitor the **flow of traffic**. but there are often problems with power and kit not working. In 2022, 2331 faults were identified in on the system. The length of fault averaged five days!

One whistleblower (a National Highways Traffic Officer) spoke to the Panorama team he said in his view smart motorways can be better described as “scary not smart”.

The National Highways officer said the radar can't be trusted. Figures show the radar only detects 89% of vehicles. That means one in ten aren't spotted.

Cameras operate as fallback if there's a problem with radar, but some cameras do not work or are focusing on the sky or ground rather than the traffic. He added, “some cameras are just simply old.”

The Department of Transport says smart motorways are amongst the safest roads on our network. It recognises that the public need to feel safe when driving.

It has cancelled plans for all the new smart motorway schemes.

What about the emergency refuges which are supposed to help keep

safe road users safe. In 2020 it was noted refuges had been spaced too far apart. In some places they were two and a half miles apart. The government has promised to build more.

150 new refuges are supposed to be completed within a year but so far only 13 have been finished (according to National Highways data). A further 34 are under construction. National Highways state safety is a priority, and that the latest data shows that Smart motorways are our safest roads. It claims to be improving the resilience of operational technologies and systems.

The danger to motorists is when things go wrong. You could find yourself trapped in a live lane and dependent on other motorists spotting your problem as the technology hasn't registered your problem. One report noted it was a full ten minutes before a red cross was displayed when a motorist found themselves stranded.

The Traffic Officer reported a smart motorway can be safe as long as the cameras and the radar are working, but at present there are too many problems and drivers are not informed.

Some whistleblowers have taken to social media to alert motorists of problems on Smart motorways.

392 incidents of power failures and 174 power outages have been reported in the last 6 months incidents have been reported in the past six months.

Without the technology working it is claimed that “you are playing Russian roulette with people’s lives”.

A spokesman for the AA called for smart motorways to be abolished and reiterated that to date 79 people have been killed on smart motorways. The programme concluded with the question, “Is it time to end the smart motorway experiment?”



What does RoSPA say about Smart Motorways? *Road Safety Factsheet: Smart Motorways RoSPA June 2022 (Abridged)*

Research indicates that all three types of Smart Motorways are safer than conventional motorways in terms of casualties.

Traditionally, a motorway had three (sometimes two) lanes of traffic and a hard shoulder for emergency use. With a predicted 60% increase in traffic by 2040, ways of increasing capacity without widening motorways or building new ones have been developed. This led to the

introduction of what are now called Smart Motorways (previously known as Managed Motorways).

RoSPA outlines the three types of Smart Motorways in operation in England (**as outlined in the comparison report by the Department of Transport**)

They all use technology to actively manage the flow of traffic from a regional control centre where the traffic using the motorway is carefully monitored and managed.

Overhead gantry signs control the permitted speed and the lanes that can be used at any given time. They all open the hard shoulder as a running lane to traffic, either only at busy periods as indicated by the electronic signs, or permanently, and they all have emergency refuges at intervals along the inside of the hard shoulder. **However, the distance between the emergency refuges varies between different motorways.**

Driving on a Smart Motorway is similar in many respects to driving on a traditional motorway where you must obey the rules of the Highway Code. You must not exceed the National Speed limit of 70 mph or the posted speed shown in the red circular sign above the lane, which is enforced by speed cameras.

When driving on any motorway it is vital to keep a safe distance from the vehicle in front; in normal weather conditions, a two-second gap is the minimum recommended. This can be gauged by noting when the vehicle in front passes a fixed object, say a bridge, and saying ‘only a fool breaks the two second rule’. If you reach the stationary object before completing the sentence, you are too close to the vehicle in front. In poor weather, the gap should be increased to at least four seconds on wet roads, and even more in ice, snow and fog.

Drivers should only use the hard shoulder as a running lane when the electronic gantry signs say they may do so. **Be aware that the hard shoulder may only be open for traffic that is leaving the motorway at the next exit; the signs will indicate this.**

On all lane running motorways, drivers may use the former hard shoulder as a normal traffic lane, unless the signs say it is closed due to an emergency. Lane markings will show it as a normal lane rather than a hard shoulder denoted by a solid white line. As on all motorways, if overtaking slower vehicles, return to the left-hand lane as soon as you are safely past.



The hard shoulder must never be used if a red X is displayed on the gantry sign above the lane.

The red X Sign shows that a lane is closed and **MUST not be used. If you see a red X closing a lane, you should move out of that lane promptly.** It might be closed because there is an incident or broken-down vehicle ahead, or a person, animal or be road workers in the road. The lane may be closed to provide access for emergency vehicles such as an ambulance. Never drive in a lane closed by a red X; it is dangerous and illegal. If you do drive in a lane closed by a red X, you could receive a £100 fine.

What to do in the case of a breakdown

A well-maintained vehicle will reduce the likelihood of a breakdown, meaning it is important to check your tyres and ensure

that you have enough fuel to complete your journey.

If you do break down on a Smart Motorway, if possible, make your way to the next emergency refuge area (or service station if closer) and use the emergency telephone to alert the Control Centre.

There is no charge to use this telephone.

Exit your vehicle from the passenger door away from the live traffic and if possible, stand on the opposite side of the safety barrier as far away from the traffic as possible.

If you have a puncture, wait for a breakdown organisation rather than try to change the wheel yourself as they will have the necessary equipment to change the tyre quickly or to tow you to a garage if it cannot be repaired.

Unlike a traditional hard shoulder, which provides enough space to build up speed before re-joining the flow of traffic, **the emergency refuges on a Smart Motorway do not have enough space for this. Therefore, National Highways will either send a Traffic Officer to help you or set the motorway signs to temporarily close lane one so you can safely re-join the motorway.**

If your vehicle breaks down in live traffic and you cannot make it to an emergency refuge area, **do not exit your vehicle. Switch on your hazard warning lights, call the police and inform the operator that you have broken down in live traffic on a motorway and let them know your location as accurately as possible.** This will help Highways England to spot you as quickly as possible on CCTV and to close the lane you are in. **Keep your seatbelt on for protection in case of a rear end collision.**

England's motorways are amongst the safest roads in the world and each smart motorway must be at least as safe as the traditional motorway it replaces.

However, due to safety concerns and confusion caused an action plan was formed and a decision made to scrap dynamic hard shoulder smart motorways completely. Other changes agreed were:

- Making the deployment of "stopped vehicle detection" (SVD) systems faster
- Measures to ensure that the distance between emergency refuge areas is one mile maximum, ideally $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile. This means that motorists will reach a refuge every 45 seconds when travelling at 60mph.
- Emergency refuge areas will be made more visible: they will be given a bright orange road surface, dotted lines on the surface that indicate where to stop, more signs on the approach to the area to indicate where it is, and new signs inside the area that show what to do in an emergency.

A £5 million national communications campaign to make motorists more aware of not only how to use smart motorways, but how to use them safely.

- Investigations are to be made into specific parts of the smart motorway network by Highways England, namely the M6 and M1, where there have been many incidents.

A full version of this paper can be found on the RoSPA website: www.rospa.com

Answers to quiz May 2024

Roadcraft Chapter 3 :

Information, Observation & Anticipation

Distraction can affect observation and hazard perception, making anticipation of hazards more difficult.

What is a hazard?

- 1) **Name the three main types of hazard**

Physical features e.g. Junctions bends, road surface

The position or movement of other road users e.g. drivers, motorcyclists, cyclists, pedestrians.

Weather conditions, e.g. poor visibility, icy road

Planning: Safer driving depends on systematically using the information you gather from observation

- 2) Hence good planning depends on **early** observation and **early** anticipation of risk.

- 3) The purpose of planning is to put you:

- **In the correct position**
- **At the correct speed**
- **With the correct gear engaged**
- **And at the correct time.**

.....to negotiate hazards safely and efficiently.

- 4) Anticipating hazards gives you extra **time**. **The more time you have to react to a hazard, the more likely you will be able to deal with it safely.**

- 5) How can you prioritise multiple hazards?

It will depend on:

Deal with hazards in order of importance

What is the hazard?

How close is to you?

What is the road layout

Is the hazard stationary or moving?

How fast are you approaching it?

Practice applying the three stages of planning during every journey until you do it automatically, even when you are driving under pressure (P 51)
Roadcraft